

IMPROVEMENTS.

The clever improvements of wit and humor have made many an incident memorable which otherwise would long ago have been forgotten. Thus, no matter what the occasion might be, Theodore Hook could always improvise verses. On one occasion, when delighting a party at his cottage at Fulham by an extemporaneous song, his servant entered in the middle of it with "Pardon, sir, here's Mr. Winter, the tax-gatherer; he says he has called for taxes." Hook would not be interrupted, but went on at the piano as if nothing had happened with the following stanza:

"Here comes Mr. Winter, collector of taxes, I advise you to pay him whatever he asks; for he won't do, he stands no sort of humbug."

Lord Chesterfield being one day asked by Sir Thomas Robinson, familiarly known as "Long Sir Thomas" or "Long Tom," to write some verses upon him, produced the epigram:

"Unlike my subject now shall be my song, It shall be witty, and it shall be long. There is an amusing story told of Thackeray and Albert Smith. The latter once wrote in an album of a young lady who was travelling in Switzerland the following feeble impromptu:

"Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains, They crowned him long ago; But who they got to put it on, Nobody seems to know."

Thackeray, being asked by the same lady to contribute to her collection, and coming across the above lines, at once wrote the subject:

"I know that Albert wrote in hurry; To criticize is man's prerogative. But yet methinks that Lindley Murray, Instead of who, had written 'where'."

One evening Mr. Whitbread was talking somewhat loudly at Brooks' against the Ministry for laying what he called the war tax upon malt. But Sheridan could not resist the gratification of a hit at the brewer himself, and wrote the following lines which he handed across the table to Mr. Whitbread:

"They've raised the price of table drink, What is the reason, do you think? The tax on malt, the cause, I hear, But what has malt to do with beer?"

On another occasion when Lord Erskine declared at a large party, where Lady Erskine and Sheridan were present, that "a wife was only a tin canister tied to one's tail," Sheridan, presented Lady Erskine with these lines:

"Lord Erskine, at woman presuming to call, Calls a wife 'a tin canister tied to one's tail.' And fair Lady Anne, while the subject he carries on, Seems hurt at his lordship's degrading comparison."

"But wherefore degrading? Considered right, A canister's polished and useful and bright, And should dirt its original purity hide, That's the fault of the puppy to whom it is tied."

Lord Carteret was distinguished by a ready wit, with which he could repart over the attacks of Swift. On a certain occasion, when the Duke visited the castle, and waited without seeing the Lord Lieutenant, he wrote on one of the windows of the chamber of audience these lines:

"My very good Lord, 'tis a very hard task For a man to wait here who has nothing to ask. Upon which Lord Carteret wrote this reply:

"My very good Dean, there are few who come here But have something to ask or something to fear."

When Curran visited France in the year 1814 he wrote in pencil on the column erected about a mile to the west of Boulogne, by Napoleon, to commemorate his attempt to invade England, the following lines:

"When ambition achieves its desire, How forties laugh at the joke; He rose in a pillar of fire, To set in a pillar of smoke."

James Smith was a bright star in the circle in which Lady Blessington shone with so much brilliancy. He was in the habit of sending her ladyship occasional epigrams and complimentary scraps of verse, the subject of impromptu verses having been written at Gore House:

"Mild Withered, by all beloved, Once owned this hall's spot, Whose zealous elegance improved The fetter'd negro's lot."

"Yet here still Slavery attacks, Whom Blessington invites; The chain from which he freed the Blacks She fastens on the Whites."

When a well-known counsel was cross-examining an elderly spinster, with the object of eliciting from her that certain money in dispute had been tendered, Jekyll threw him this couplet:

"Go now, forsooth, that tough old jade Will never prove a tender maid."

De Kitchener was famous for his Saturday dinners in Warren-street, to which only those learned in culinary lore were invited. On the chimney-glass in the refectory was posted the following notice:

"Come at seven, Come at seven, Come at seven, Come at seven."

On a certain occasion one of the party was George Colman the younger, who gave to the duchess, by the secret interpretation of a little pun, a very extended meaning: "Go (it) at eleven."

John Kemble's table-talk often flowed into black verse, and Sir Walter Scott used to chuckle with glee over the recollection of an excursion to the Vale of Ebbw, near which river the parties were pursued by a bull. "Come, King John," said he, "we must even take the water," and so he and his daughter plunged into the stream. But King John, halting on the bank, exclaimed, in his usual solemn manner:

"The flood is angry, Sheriff, Methinks I'll get me up to a tree."

Byron occasionally gave forth impromptu verses, and his earlier effusions are said to have been caused, when a child, by the visit of certain ladies with regard to the soul, which he imagined took its flight to the moon after death, as a preliminary to being proceeding further. After this young Byron declared that he could not bear the sight of her, and broke into the following doggerel, which he repeated over and over again:

"In Nottingham town, very near to Swalegreen, Lives as crumbly an old lady as ever was seen. And when she does die, which I hope will be soon, She firmly believes she will go to the moon."

Lord Thomas Erskine made several good impromptu, and on hearing one day that a certain house in Red Lion Square, once occupied by a Council of some eminence, had

been taken by an ironsmith, he wrote these lines:

"This house where once a lawyer dwelt, Is now a smith's—alas! How rapidly the Iron Age Succeeds the Age of Brass."

—Evening Standard.

HOW TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK.

"What time is it, Maggie?" said John, with an uneasy sense that he ought to be on his homeward way.

"I'll go and look," she answered. Stepping quietly into the kitchen the girl pushed the clock hands back an hour, and returning, said, "It's only half-past nine by our clock; you can stay as long as you like."

John stayed, for lovers are never eager to part and he needed no coaxing. The next morning, however, he awoke, and found himself, at his breakfast, having missed the train he intended to journey by that day, wondering how the good old clock could have lost an hour in the night. But Maggie didn't explain. She meant to set it right again before going to bed, but forgot, which shows once more what everybody should remember—that we can set back the clock, but we cannot set back the time.

At the same time it is possible occasionally to set back things. In a woman's letter recently received, I find this sentence: "They tell me I look ten years younger than I did." And if she felt as she looked she was to all practical purposes ten years younger. For, although a clock has lost the same matter what time it is, a human face doesn't. That changes with the condition of the 'works,' or the life behind it.

The letter goes on thus: "In the spring of 1891 I felt weak and low. I had a bad taste in the mouth and a thick slimy phlegm covered my mouth and tongue. I was sick in a morning, retching and vomiting a watery fluid. I had great pain in the head and was very dizzy, being at times so bad I could hardly stand upon my feet. After eating the simplest food I had dreadful pain in my chest, and a tightness across the chest and sides. For hours together I could scarcely walk about the house, and for the necessity of attending to my family, I should have been laid up. My life was a burden and a misery to me, and I often wished myself dead."

Sometimes better and at other times worse; during which long period of suffering I was treated by the best doctors, and took every kind of medicine I could hear of, but got no better."

In November, 1890, I read in a book of a medicine called Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and got a bottle from Mr. E. Banks, the chemist, after he had taken the trouble to write me a letter agreeing with me better. I kept on with the Syrup and gradually gained strength. I had become so thin and emaciated through all those years of suffering that it took time to fully restore me. But I am now in better health than I ever was in my life, and my recovery has astonished my friends. They tell me I look ten years younger than I did for taking the Syrup. How I wish I had known of it years sooner! My husband and friends had given up all hope of my getting better, but none of us knew of Mother Seigel's Syrup."

On mentioning to the Rev. E. Harries, the Vicar of Christ Church, what had wrought the cure, he said I should write and let the proprietors know what the Syrup had done for me, so as to benefit others. You may publish this statement as you think proper and I will gladly answer inquiries. Yours truly, (signed) (Mrs) Elizabeth Greenhalgh, 21, Rutland Street, Newtown, Pembrokeshire (near Manchester), May 14th, 1892.

Thus, this good woman enabled—not to turn back her nominal age, but what was better—to recover the priceless treasure of health, without which neither youth nor age has any comfort. Her malady was the same wretched indigestion and dyspepsia, the curse of all ages and nations.

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Yokohama (via Nagasaki, Kobe, Inland Sea and Yokohama) Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 1 p.m.

Belgia (via Nagasaki, Kobe, Inland Sea and Yokohama) Wednesday, Oct. 10, at 1 p.m.

THE Steamship OCEANIC will be dispatched for SAN FRANCISCO, via NAGASAKI, KOBE, INLAND SEA and YOKOHAMA, on TUESDAY, the 21st August, at 1 p.m., connection being made at YOKOHAMA with STEAMERS from Shanghai.

Steamers of this line pass through the INLAND SEA OF JAPAN and call at HONOLULU, and passengers are allowed to break their journey at any point en route.

Through Passengers Tickets granted to England, France, and Germany by all transatlantic lines of Steamers, and to the principal cities of the United States or Canada. Rates and particulars of the various routes may be obtained upon application.

Special rates (first class only) are granted to Missionaries, members of the Naval, Military, Diplomatic, and Civil Services, and to European officials in service of China and Japan, and to Government officials and their families.

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All Parcel Packages should be marked to address in full, and same will be received at the Company's Office until 5 p.m. the day previous to sailing.

Consular Invoices to accompany Cargo, destined to ports beyond San Francisco in the United States, should be sent to the Company's Office, addressed to the Collector of Customs, San Francisco.

For further information as to Freight, or Passage, apply to the Agents of the Company, No. 7, Praya Central.

J. S. VAN BUREN, Agent.

Hongkong, August 1, 1894. 1261

NOTICE.

COMPAGNIE DES MESSAGERIES MARITIMES.

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ALSO PORTS OF BRAZIL AND LA PLATA.

ON WEDNESDAY, the 22nd August, 1894, at Noon, the Company's Steamship OKUS, Commandant DUBOIS, with MAILES, will leave this Port for the above places.

G. DE CHAMPEAUX, Agent.

Hongkong, August 9, 1894. 1300

NORTHERN PACIFIC STEAMSHIP AND RAILROAD COMPANIES.

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(SUBJECT TO ALTERATION).

Victoria..... Tuesday August 28.

Tacoma..... Tuesday Sept. 25.

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THE Steamship VICTORIA, Capt. JOHN PAXTON, R.N.R., sailing at Noon, on TUESDAY, the 28th August, will proceed via WICKLOO, B.C. and TACOMA to HONOLULU, INLAND SEA, KOBE and YOKOHAMA.

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Hongkong, August 9, 1894. 1301

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Hongkong, July 2, 1894. 1107

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